



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

CANADA MUST HARDEN ITS TONE TO CONVINC THE BURMESE MILITARY JUNTA TO END ITS REPRESSION

Ottawa, Thursday, 27 September 2007 – **Francine Lalonde**, the Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic and MP for La Pointe-de-L'Île, believes that Canada must impose strong economic sanctions, including a halt on new investments, on the Burmese military junta to make it stop repressing the people immediately. Canada must coordinate its actions with other members of the international community in order to make the military junta negotiate a gradual return to democracy with the representatives of the regime in exile and the ethnic communities.

Ms Lalonde recalled that, on 18 May 2005, the House of Commons adopted the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade's report on Burma adopted on 1 December 2004. The Foreign Affairs Committee motion proposed economic sanctions such as a general embargo to make the military junta negotiate a peaceful transition to democracy. This motion specified that everything must be done in cooperation with Aung San Suu Ky's National League for Democracy (NLD) and representatives of the ethnic minorities, as called for in all the United Nations resolutions on Burma since 1994.

"The remarks made by the new minister, Maxime Bernier, are extremely weak compared to the text adopted by Parliament in May 2005, which was much more restrictive. The Bloc Québécois thinks that Canada should ask its companies to suspend their investments in Burma," **Ms Lalonde** said.

Ms Lalonde said that Canada should provide a concrete demonstration of its support for the legitimate Burmese authorities, that is, the government in exile. "The Bloc Québécois salutes the courageous uprising by the monks and the Burmese people against a regime that has never respected the results of the democratic election of May 1990. This regime spreads terror; it has been oppressing the Burmese people for too long. This is the same regime that has kept Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Aung San Suu Ky under house arrest for over 10 years."

"This uprising to restore democracy is a call for help asking the international community to use every means available to end the violence in Burma. That is why it is essential that the UN Special Envoy for Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, be able to enter Burma and report on the situation with all necessary latitude. Canada must make sure of it," **Ms Lalonde** concluded.

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